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ABSTRACT

This study in Knox County, Tennessee, was done to determine how those attending Extension clothing construction workshops differed from others; which recommended clothing instruction practices were being used; and factors influencing respondents to adopt or reject practices. Forty-five participants and a random sample of 45 nonparticipants were interviewed. Data were analyzed by numbers, percentages, and adoption ratings. Results indicated that the average home demonstration club member in the county in 1967 was about 49, had three family members, reported a gross family income of $7,867, was not employed, had some training in home economics, and had used two information sources on clothing construction during the previous year. Adoption ratings (including overall scores) were higher for participants than for nonparticipants on all 14 practices. Greatest differences (cited in order) were on clean finishing, trimming seams, applying zippers, staysticking, reading labels and hang tags when buying fabrics, using interfacing, and making darts. Factors influencing adoption included employment status, sources of assistance and instruction in clothing construction, and the types of training received. (Authors/ LY)

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A Research Summary of a Graduate Study

SOME SELECTED CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES OF TWO SELECTED HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBER GROUPS IN KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE

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SOME SELECTED CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES OF TWO SELECTED HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBER GROUPS IN KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE

by

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to try to determine the clothing construction situation in Knox County, Tennessee. It was conducted for the purposes of: 1) finding how those who attended Extension clothing construction workshops differ characteristically from others; 2) determining which recommended clothing construction practices the respondents were using, and 3) identifying some of the factors influencing them to adopt or reject practices. Forty-five participants in clothing construction workshops and a random sample of 45 who did not participate constituted the groups interviewed for comparative purposes. Data were analyzed in numbers and percents, and practice adoption of homemakers was compared on the basis of practice adoption ratings.

Findings disclosed that the average home demonstration club member in the county in 1967 had the following characteristics: 1) was about 49 years of age; 2) had an average of 3 family members; 3)reported a gross family income of $7,867; 4) was not employed; 5) had some training in home economics, and 6) used an average of two sources of information for clothing construction during the previous year.

With regard to the adoption of 14 recommended practices studied, ratings were higher for participants than nonparticipants for all practices. Greatest differences between the two groups, in order, were noted on: 1) "Clean-

finishing"; 2) "Triming seams"; 3) "Applying zippers"; 4) "Staystitching"; 5) "Reading labels and hang tags when buying fabrics"; 6) "Using interfacing"; and 7) "Making darts." Participants had higher overall practice adoption scores than did nonparticipants.

Factors influencing practice adoption included: 1) employment of the homemaker; 2) source of clothing construction assistance; 3) source of clothing construction information, and 4) type of training in clothing construction.

Recommendations were made for use of the findings and for additional research.

RESEARCH SUMMARY*

I. INTRODUCTION

For Extension workers in Knox County to have a basis upon which to plan long-range educational programs in the clothing work areas, specific benchmark data were needed with regard to the 367 (42 percent of all members) home demonstration club members who constructed garments, and with regard to the construction practices they used. Since four clothing workshops had been held during the three years prior to this 1967 study, it was desired to know what differences existed between those participating and other members who had not. The purposes of this study, then, were to collect basic benchmark data for use in Knox County Extension program planning and to discover the differences in practice adoption between home demonstration club members who had attended a clothing workshop and those who had not attended a clothing workshop. Answers to the following specific questions were sought:

1. How did those who attended Extension clothing construction workshops differ characteristically from others?

2. Which of the recommended clothing construction practices were the respondents using?

3. What factors influenced club members to adopt or reject recommended practices?

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Research Methodology

The study was limited to homemakers who were known to sew. The group was divided into two sub-populations; those who had participated in at least one Extension clothing workshop in the past three years and had constructed a garment in conjunction with the workshop; and those who had not participated in any Extension clothing workshop or had not completed a garment related thereto.

Forty-five of the participants who were available for interview and 45 nonparticipants randomly selected from home demonstration club members who sewed were personally interviewed in home visits.

The interview schedule used was adapted from the Tennessee Recommended Clothing Practice Checklist. Analyses were made in numbers, percentages, and averages according to all members interviewed, participants, and nonparticipants.

The interviewees were questioned concerning their adoption of fourteen recommended clothing practices. A rating scale was developed and used for each of the fourteen practices. For comparative purposes, a percentage or practice adoption score was given, based on the degree of use of all practices.

Related Literature

Findings from previous studies indicated that general characteristics describing home demonstration club members who sew included the fact that they averaged about 50 years of age, tended to be in medium to low income groups, were not usually employed outside the home, had had some clothing

construction training and used a range of sources of home economics information.

Previous findings showed that innovators tended to be among the first to try and adopt new ideas, all others being referred to as non-innovators. The speed with which practice adoption takes place had been found to be partly dependent upon the practices themselves.

Concerning factors which influence practice adoption, earlier studies have shown that certain factors do influence the adoption of practices while others do not. Factors considered influential were: aspirations and capabilities, stages of practice adoption, source of information and personal influence.

II. MAJOR FINDINGS

Characteristics of Respondents

Listed below are some of the principal findings regarding characteristics of Knox County home demonstration club members who sew.

1. Almost all of the interviewees (96 percent) enjoyed sewing.

2. The average age of all interviewees was 49.3 years; participants averaged 51.8 years, and nonparticipants 47.8 years.

3. All interviewees were married (excepting six widows); the average number of family members being 3.21 for all respondents, 3.00 for participants and 3.42 for nonparticipants.

4. The median annual gross family income reported by all interviewees was $7,867; $7,850 for participants and $7,999 for nonparticipants.

5. Twenty-two percent of all the interviewees were employed away

from home; 7 percent of the participants (not including the 20 percent who were seamstresses working at home for profit) and 18 percent of the nonparticipants were in this group (none of them being seamstresses).

6. One-third of all interviewees had received assistance in clothing construction from the home agent; this included 40 percent of the participants and 17 percent of the nonparticipants.

Clothing Construction Practices

A summary of the major findings related to the adoption of recommended clothing construction practices by those interviewed is listed below.

1. Over one-half of the participants and one-fourth of the nonparticipants made tailored garments the previous year.

2. Participants had done a larger amount of regular sewing (e.g., dresses, blouses, skirts) than nonparticipants, though nonparticipants made more miscellaneous garments (e.g., swimwear and formals).

3. When the rating scheme was applied, practice adoption scores fell in an overall range from 18 to 90 percent for all interviewees, the participants averaging 73, and the nonparticipants averaging 50.

4. When the fourteen recommended clothing construction practices were rated individually on an 8.00 scale, four practices were found to rate exceedingly low (below 5.00) for participants and 10 were so rated for nonparticipants.

Influential Factors

Findings listed below concern the factors which might have influenced interviewees to adopt or not adopt recommended clothing construction practices.

1. The practice adoption score appeared not to be related to the age of the homemaker; participants with the highest average score being in the "25-34" year age group, and nonparticipants with the highest scores being in the "45-54" year age group.

2. Neither size of family nor amount of gross family income appeared to have influence on practice adoption for all interviewees, participants, or nonparticipants.

3. The greater the number of sources of assistance and information the homemakers in all groups reported using in clothing construction, the higher the practice adoption scores.

4. Those who had received Extension training in clothing construction had scores comparable to those who reported college training (the high score category).

5. The more different types of training the homemaker had, the higher was the practice adoption score.

6. Nearly three-fourths of all respondents felt sewing was of greatest benefit to them in the form of financial savings, approximately one-fourth liking the better fitting garments and another one-fourth disliking sewing because it was too time consuming.

7. Over one-half of the interviewees felt homemakers did not adopt recommended clothing construction practices because of insufficient time or lack of proper training.

III. IMPLICATIONS

Some of the implications that might be drawn from the findings include the following:

1. Since workshop participants in this study tended to be more innovative than nonparticipants and have characteristics similar to innovators in other studies, it is inferred that the clothing construction workshops held in Knox County tended to attract potential adopters or innovators.

2. Since most of the respondents interviewed liked sewing because of the financial benefits derived, emphasis should be given to the financial benefit when informing homemakers regarding clothing workshops.

3. Since workshop participants learned how to use recommended clothing construction practices and continued to use them, workshop educational efforts appear to be justifiable use of home agent time.

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TABLE I

AVERAGE CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE ADOPTION RATINGS AND TOTAL AVERAGE RATINGS FOR ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS

Clothing construction practices*	Total members (N=90) average points	Participants (N=45) average points	Nonparticipants (N=45) average points
Buying practices:			
Selecting correct pattern sizes	6.24	6.80	5.64
Reading labels and/or hang tags when buying fabric	4.26	4.73	3.78
Keeping a clothing plan	1.74	2.31	1.16
Preliminary steps:			
Straightening fabric for cutting	4.63	5.16	4.09
Marking construction details	4.49	4.89	4.00
Construction practices:			
Understitching	6.76	7.64	5.87
Pressing as garment is made	6.67	7.64	6.40
Hemming	5.97	6.36	5.64
Trimming (layering, grading, beveling) seams	5.69	7.64	3.91
Using interfacing	5.39	6.27	4.40
Making darts	5.23	6.09	4.47
Applying zippers	4.42	5.93	2.93
Staystitching	4.40	5.64	3.20
Cleanfinishing facings	2.86	4.62	.89
Total average rating	4.91	5.82	4.00

*From 0-8 points could have been earned for each recommended practice; 0 points were given if practice was not used; 1-7 points were given if only parts of a practice were used; 8 points were given if practice was used as recommended.

TABLE II

INCOMES IN RELATION TO PRACTICE ADOPTION SCORES* OF ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS, BY NUMBERS AND AVERAGE SCORES**

Income (in dollars)	Total		Participants		Nonparticipants	
	No.	Average score	No.	Average score	No.	Average score
Not answered	7	67	2	85	5	60
0 - 1,999	5	77	5	77	0	0
2,000 - 3,999	6	42	2	49	4	38
4,000 - 5,999	17	59	8	69	9	50
6,000 - 7,999	15	63	8	76	7	48
8,000 - 9,999	13	59	6	59	7	51
10,000 -11,999	11	67	7	75	4	54
12,000 -13,999	3	64	1	79	2	57
14,000 -15,999	4	57	1	86	3	47
16,000--17,999	3	63	2	75	1	40
18,000 -19,999	1	70	1	70	0	0
20,000 -21,999	3	51	1	80	2	36
22,000 -23,999	1	52	1	52	0	0
24,000 -25,999	1	79	0	0	1	79
Total	90	62	45	73	45	50

*The scores were based on the rated use of 14 recommended clothing construction practices by each member interviewed and constitute percents correct.

**Scores are rounded to the nearest whole number.

TABLE III

EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE HOME IN RELATION TO PRACTICE ADOPTION SCORES* OF ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS, BY NUMBERS AND AVERAGE SCORES**

Employment of Member outside the home	Total		Participants		Nonparticipants	
	No.	Average score	No.	Average score	No.	Average score
Not employed	70	60	33	72	37	49
Employed (other than seamstress)	11	61	3	69	8	58
Employed (seamstress)	9	78	9	78	0	0
Total	90	62	45	73	45	50

*The scores were based on the rated use of 14 recommended clothing construction practices by each member interviewed and constitute percents correct.

**Scores are rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

TABLE IV

SOURCES OF CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE USED DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR IN RELATION TO PRACTICE ADOPTION SCORES* OF ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS BY NUMBERS AND AVERAGE SCORES**

Source of assistance	Total		Participants		Nonparticipants	
	No.	Average score	No.	Average score	No.	Average score
None reported	39	56	15	70	24	48
Home agent	25	71	18	75	7	61
Clothing leader	19	52	6	67	13	45
Neighbor or friend	9	70	7	74	2	57
Mother or daughter	4	74	3	78	1	61
Home economics teacher	1	67	0	0	1	67
Total***	90	62	45	73	45	50

*The scores were based on the rated use of 14 recommended clothing construction practices by each member interviewed and constitute percents correct.

**Scores are rounded to the nearest whole number.

***Members may have used more than one source of assistance; therefore, numbers do not total.

TABLE V

SOURCES OF CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION USED THE PREVIOUS YEAR IN RELATION TO PRACTICE ADOPTION SCORES* OF ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS, BY NUMBERS AND AVERAGE SCORES**

Sources of information	Total		Participants		Nonparticipants	
	No.	Average score	No.	Average score	No.	Average score
None reported	3	39	1	56	2	31
Home demonstration club meetings	73	64	41	74	33	51
University bulletins and publications	54	67	33	76	21	54
Home demonstration workshops (non-participants did not complete garment)	46	73	37	75	9	65
Magazines	13	63	7	71	6	54
Pattern publications	12	71	9	75	3	59
Total***	90	62	45	73	45	50

*The scores were based on the rated use of 14 recommended clothing construction practices by each member interviewed and constitute percents correct.

**Scores are rounded to the nearest whole number.

***Members may have had more than one source of information; therefore, numbers do not add up to total.

TABLE VI

TYPES OF TRAINING IN CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION IN RELATION TO PRACTICE ADOPTION SCORES* OF ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS, BY NUMBERS AND AVERAGE SCORES**

	Total		Participants		Nonparticipants	
Type of training	No.	Average score	No.	Average score	No.	Average score
None reported	3	32	0	0	3	32
High school	59	59	24	73	35	49
Extension	54	71	45	73	9	58
Mother or other family member	37	67	21	74	16	56
Commercial	14	49	8	75	6	50
College	10	71	6	79	4	58
Adult education	9	60	3	70	6	55
Total***	90	62	45	73	45	50

*The scores were based on the rated use of 14 recommended clothing construction practices by each member interviewed and constitute percents correct.

**Scores are rounded to the nearest whole number.

***Members may have had more than one source of training; therefore, numbers do not add up to totals.

TABLE VII

BENEFITS OF SEWING MENTIONED BY ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS, ACCORDING TO NUMBERS AND PERCENTS*

Benefits of sewing**	Total		Participant		Nonparticipant	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Did not feel benefits	2	2	0	0	2	4
Financial savings	65	72	29	65	36	80
Better fit	21	23	12	27	9	20
Better quality	8	9	4	9	4	9
Pleasure or hobby	8	9	5	11	3	7
Source of income	5	6	5	11	0	0
Individual style	2	2	1	2	1	2

*Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Members may have recognized more than one benefit; therefore, numbers and percents do not add up to total.

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TABLE VIII

NUMBERS AND PERCENTS OF ALL KNOX COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUB MEMBERS INTERVIEWED, PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANTS, RATING VARIOUS REASONS WHY HOMEMAKERS DID NOT ADOPT RECOMMENDED CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES: FIRST SECOND OR THIRD RANKING*

	Total (N=90)		Participants (N=45)		Nonparticipants (N-45)	
Various reasons**	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Not enough time	57	63	25	56	32	71
Have not had proper training	49	54	22	49	27	60
Learned another way and do not want to change	44	49	25	56	19	42
Other more rewarding activities claim homemakers' time and money	39	43	16	36	23	51
Do not believe practices are necessary for time required	31	34	21	47	10	22
Do not have necessary equipment	28	31	16	36	12	27
Have tried and found practices unsatisfactory	10	11	3	7	7	16
Cost of sewing outweighs possible benefits	9	10	7	16	2	4

*Percents are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Numbers and percents do not total as each homemaker gave three reasons.

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